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The Martyrdom of Malcolm and Martin

Our prophets of change, Malcolm and Martin, were spied on and undermined by government agencies in ways that led, step by step, to their murders.

by James W. Douglass

Salaam aleikum.
Shalom.
Peace be with you.

When Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated in the spring of 1968, I was teaching a religion course at the University of Hawaii called "The Theology of Peace." Several students were moved by King's death and his resistance to the Vietnam War to burn their draft cards, making them liable to years in prison. I joined their anti-war group, the Hawaii Resistance.

A month later, we sat in front of a convoy of trucks taking the members of the Hawaii National Guard to Oahu's Jungle Warfare Training Center, on their way to the jungles of Vietnam. I went to jail for two weeks — the beginning of the end of my academic career. Members of the Hawaii Resistance served from six months to two years in prison for their draft resistance, or wound up going into exile in Sweden or Canada.

Martin Luther King's martyrdom was our baptism into nonviolence as a way of life, a step beyond our classes where we talked hopefully but abstractly about a theology of peace. King's willingness to give his life inspired us to choose life.

We learned that freedom is not free. The cross is real. A way of liberation passes through fire. More than three decades later, while attending the only trial ever held for Dr. King's murder, in a Memphis courtroom a few blocks from where he was killed, I heard 70 witnesses describe the fire he passed through.

The witnesses testified how King was stalked and killed, not by the scapegoat James Earl Ray, but by U.S. government agencies using Mafia intermediaries, Memphis police officers, and an Army Special Forces team. I learned that Martin Luther King, Jr., after vowing to end the Vietnam War and systemic poverty in the United States, was set up and murdered by our national security state. His assassination was carried out and covered up by the same government that now honors his birthday as a national holiday.

The revelation of Martin's martyrdom led me to investigate the martyrdom of Malcolm X. What I discovered was a similar plot. I learned that Malcolm X, El-Haj Malik El-Shabazz, while trying to put the United States on trial in the United Nations for human rights violations against African Americans, also became a government target. He was stalked and killed by U.S. intelligence agencies using, not Mafia, but Nation of Islam intermediaries.

Martin and Malcolm were both executed by what Dr. King described, at the height of the Vietnam War, as "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today — my own government." [1]

While our government waged a criminal war in Southeast Asia, in which the poor, largely people of color, of the United States fought the poor of Vietnam on behalf of a military-industrial complex, our two greatest prophets resisted that systemic, racist evil with their whole lives.

Malcolm and Martin came to see the entire Cold War as a scam, in which a corporate, racist power dominated as much of the world as it could by lying about both itself and its ideological enemy. Our prophets of change, Malcolm and Martin, were then spied on and undermined by government agencies in ways that led, step by step, to their murders.

Let us begin with the story of Malcolm's martyrdom, which will lead us into the story of Martin's martyrdom.

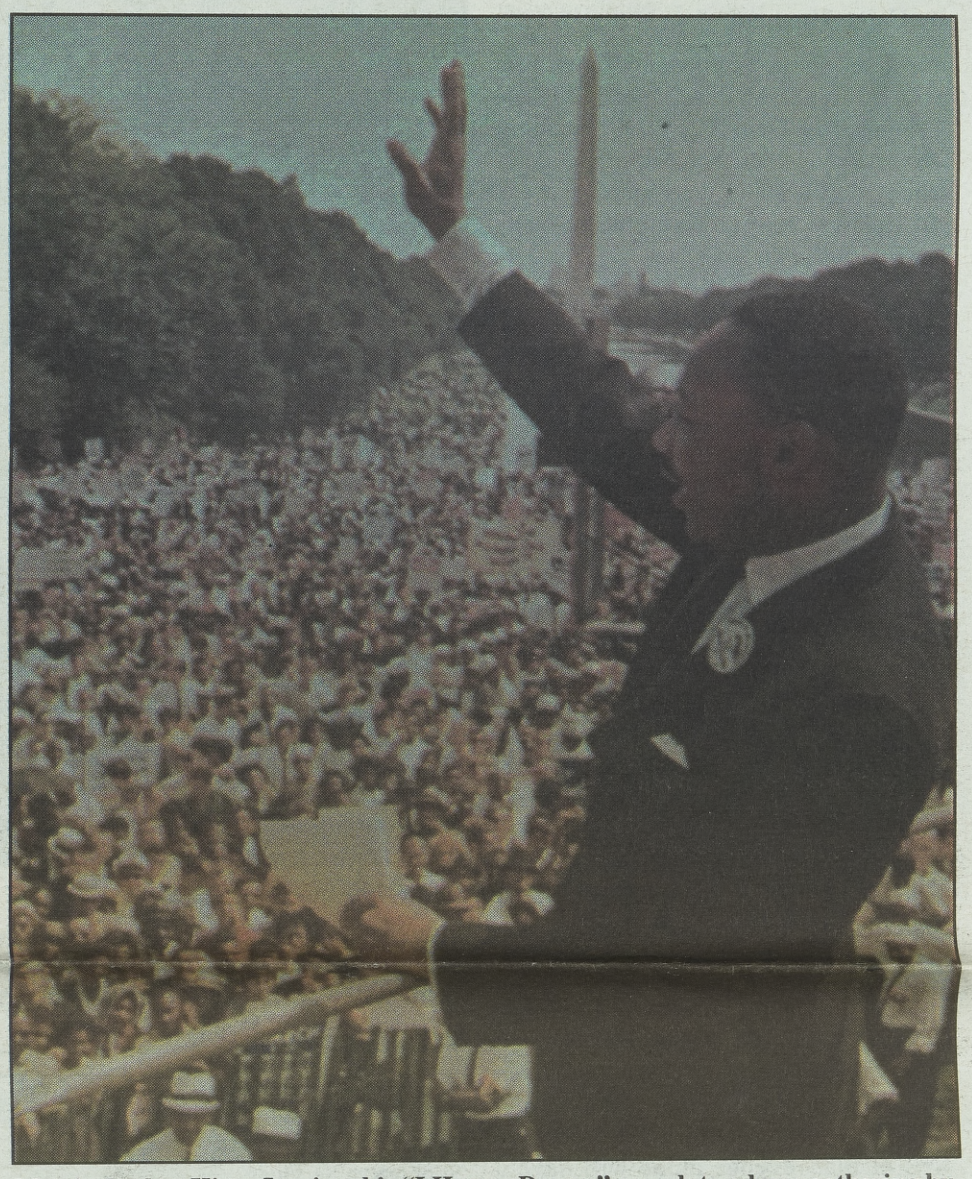
The FBI and COINTELPRO

A New York FBI director, James Fox, once made a carefully worded denial that the FBI was involved in Malcolm X's assassination. While granting that the FBI used its Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) to destroy black activists, Fox said, "I do, however, reject any suggestion that the FBI was *directly* involved in the murder of Malcolm X." [2]

The FBI could not deny having been *at least indirectly* involved in killing Malcolm X, because in the 1970s it became public knowledge that the Bureau had successfully developed a deadly conflict between Nation of Islam founder Elijah Muhammed and his disciple, Malcolm X.

The FBI's documented purpose was to develop a factional dispute that would divorce Malcolm from the Nation of Islam (NOI). [3] The FBI infiltrated "key persons" into the national staff of the NOI at its Chicago office. [4] FBI operatives in Chicago then developed the fatal division between Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X, forcing Malcolm to resign from the NOI, just as the FBI had plotted. The final fruit of the FBI's COINTELPRO and a wider government conspiracy was Malcolm X's assassination.

The most serious conflict between Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X occurred when Malcolm learned of rumors about his mentor's affairs with young women. The FBI was spreading the rumors, sending fake letters on Elijah's infidelities to his wife and ministers, foreshadowing what the Bureau would do to destroy Martin Luther King.



Martin Luther King, Jr. gives his "I Have a Dream" speech to a huge gathering by the Washington monument. In April 1968, King was assassinated while planning to return to Washington, D.C., to launch a massive Poor People's Campaign.

At the same time Malcolm X was confronting Elijah, he also spoke out publicly on President John F. Kennedy's assassination in a shocking way that gave Elijah an excuse for punishing him. Elijah ordered Malcolm to be silent for 90 days. What Malcolm had done, unlike any other public figure, was to link JFK's murder with U.S. intelligence agencies.

On December 1, 1963, after a speech he gave in New York City, Malcolm was asked his opinion of the president's murder. His response is repeated in his autobiography: "Without a second thought, I said what I honestly felt — that it was, as I saw it, a case of 'the chickens coming home to roost.' I said that the hate in white men had not stopped with the killing of defenseless black people, but that hate, allowed to spread unchecked, finally had struck down this country's Chief of State. I said it was the same thing as had happened with [civil rights leader] Medgar Evers, with Patrice Lumumba, with Madame Nhu's husband." [5]

Of the three examples Malcolm cited for the "chickens coming home to roost" in Dallas, two involved CIA-instigated killings in Third World countries: the assassinations of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo and of Ngo Dinh Nhu with his brother Diem in South Vietnam.

Malcolm's statement on the president's murder anticipated the prophetic insight he would have into the covert forces behind his own assassination. He would finally realize it was the U.S. government, not Elijah Muhammad, that was the real power behind the plot against him. Malcolm, who always had eyes in the back of his head, is the best analyst of his own murder.

Malcolm appeals to the UN

In March 1964, Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam. He then began a campaign to bring U.S. violations of African-Americans' human rights before the court of world opinion in the United Nations.

The FBI realized it had made a major miscalculation. Its COINTELPRO operation that provoked the divorce between Malcolm X and Elijah Muhammad liberated Malcolm for a bigger mission than anything he could do in the Nation of Islam. Yet the Nation could still be used to silence Malcolm. Malcolm had to be stopped because his international strategy invoking human rights against the U.S. government was catching the attention of a potential ally far more powerful than Elijah Muhammad: Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin and Malcolm met on the steps of the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C., on March 26, 1964. They had both been listening to the Senate's debate on civil rights legislation. As they shook hands warmly and were interviewed, Malcolm grinned and said he was there to remind the white man of the alternative to Dr. King. King offered a militant alternative of his own, saying that if the Senate kept on talking and doing nothing, a "cre-

See **The Converging Martyrdom** *page 5*

Organizing to Save the California Dream

"I was a client at a homeless shelter. I have been hungry. I have been afraid. I have worked hard to reach the place I am today and I am not going back to the life I used to lead."

— LaTanya Wolf, St. Mary's Center

by Paige Hustead

A spirited community forum held at St. Mary's Center in Oakland on Dec. 10, 2010, brought together members of 20 community organizations determined to speak out against recently proposed cuts to vitally needed parts of the safety net.

Those attending the forum, entitled "Organizing for the California Dream," rallied to share stories about the impact of the cuts and strategize possible solutions to California's budget crisis.

Several speakers voiced urgent warnings that impending budget cuts in California will fall with devastating force on people on both ends of the age spectrum. Seniors who rely on In Home Supportive Services and families with young children who need Stage 3 Childcare will face extremely harmful impacts from cutbacks on the state and federal level.

The morning kicked off with a comprehensive presentation from keynote speaker Anne O'Leary, executive director of the Berkeley Center on Health, Economic and Family Security, and former senior policy advisor to Hilary Clinton. Her concise summary of the latest budgetary maneuvers at the federal level provided context for the current crisis in California.

She started by noting the imminent June 2011 end-date of President Obama's $800-billion stimulus package. Since over six billion dollars of this package went directly towards California schools, the loss of that revenue alone will have a huge impact on the future state budget.

Overall, the stimulus package accounted for five percent of California's revenue. As a state, we have relied heavily on those funds and must now look towards an alternative solution.

Second, O'Leary pointed out that although 90 percent of the cost of the Healthcare Reform (set to begin in 2014) will be covered by the federal budget, the other 10 percent will fall to California. Even though ten percent might seem minimal when compared to the cost absorbed at the national level, ten percent is a huge amount to a state that is already six billion dollars in deficit.

And it only gets worse: O'Leary noted that California's budget deficit is expected to exceed $24 billion in the next 1.5 years.

Furthermore, California is expected to pay even more than 10 percent of the cost after five years. By 2019, the federal government will start to taper off its subsidy of healthcare at the state level. California will need to be aware of the impending cost of healthcare reform when formulating the future budget.

Finally, she pointed out that the unemployment level continues to rise and the "Great Recession" continues to drag more and more American citizens into poverty.

O'Leary's detailed summary of federal-level activity provided context for the budget cuts that are being discussed in California. She urged listeners to be aware of federal politics because "what happens in Washington, D. C., has a direct impact on what happens in California."

The discussion then moved towards the budget cuts for California specifically, with a focus on two major programs: Stage 3 Childcare and In Home Supportive Services.

"And Now Where?" Lithograph by Rockwell Kent

"The stress and impact that this cut will have on parents is probably more than I could describe. These cuts will steal what little hope and spirit that these people have left." — Yokia Mason

In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) is a federally and state-funded program which provides in-home services for disabled adults over the age of 65.

IHSS is considered an alternative to out-of-home care and is designed to enable disabled adults to stay independent as long as possible. The types of services which can be authorized through IHSS include housecleaning, meal preparation, laundry, grocery shopping, and personal care services.

O'Leary urgently told listeners that "cuts to this program would leave individuals who need care in a vulnerable position. These cuts will also cause employed care workers to be forced out of jobs."

She reminded the crowd that, at present, seniors make up 12 percent of the population, but will comprise about 20 percent in 2030. Who will provide care for these aging adults? How will the already scarce resources be stretched to accommodate this growing population of elderly and disabled people?

LaTanya Wolf from St. Mary's Center eloquently explained how hard life is for low-income seniors in California. "I was a client at (St. Mary's Center) homeless shelter," she said. "I have been hungry. I have been afraid. I have worked hard to reach the place I am today and I am not going back to the life I used to lead."

Wolf called the audience members to embrace their voices in this fight against budgetary cutbacks. "We have our dignity, our experience, and our knowledge," she said. "These are the tools we can use to advocate for the younger generations. We must take a stand against these harmful cuts!"

California budget cuts will also dramatically affect humans on the other end of the age spectrum. Children who receive daycare services through Stage 3 Childcare will be negatively affected by huge program cuts.

Stage 3 Childcare provides government assistance to mothers who are working full-time jobs. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger passed a $256-million cut to Stage 3 Childcare. O'Leary asserted, "Cutting childcare subsidies for parents who have successfully transitioned off welfare is a perfect example of a short-sighted plan."

The depth of loss that these cuts will inflict was explained by Yokia Mason, a former client of Black Infant Health Program (BIHP). Mason was able to work herself off welfare and is now a case manager and educator in the BIHP office in Oakland. She noted that these cuts "come without warning" and could potentially "shatter years of commitment and diligent effort" of hardworking individuals.

Mason reminded the audience that this is "generational poverty we are dealing with. Some of these parents have only known poverty for their entire lives, and their parents have lived through the same."

Stage 3 Childcare is a program designed specifically for people who have worked themselves off welfare. For some parents, this is the first time they have successfully achieved a level of stability and self-sufficiency. These men and women are on their way to independence and cuts in their childcare would destroy the life they've so delicately composed.

Yokia Mason, eyes blazing, said, "No one really wants to be poor. It's not a choice. To eliminate this program would be absolutely devastating."

Without Stage 3 Childcare, struggling mothers and fathers will be forced to choose between taking care of their children and going to work. A reduction in childcare subsidies will lead directly to more unemployed parents.

Another harmful alternative could be that children who are not developmentally ready to care for other children will have no choice but to stay home with younger siblings while parents try to maintain their employment.

Mason powerfully concluded, "Cutting this program would be cruel and unusual. The stress and impact that this cut will have on parents is probably more than I could describe. These cuts will steal what little hope and spirit that these people have left."

Local community member Jasmine Frazier, a widowed mother of a six-year-old daughter, provided her perspective by describing the potential devastation that this cut could have in her life. Frazier offered insight into the life of someone who is currently receiving benefits from the Stage 3 Childcare program.

She works full time, goes to school at Cal State East Bay in the evenings, and tries her best to spend any free time that she can with her young daughter.

She said, firmly, "I am not asking for sympathy... I just need support. I want to be self-sufficient. I have to be. I need to set a positive example for my daughter."

She continued to emphasize that her goal is independence, not stagnancy. She anxiously went on, "If this program is cut, I don't know what I'll do. Homelessness is not an option. I need to keep my job and I need to stay in school. I only have one semester left and I know that education is our key to a better life."

Stage 3 Childcare and IHSS are just two of the many programs that will suffer damaging losses from California's proposed budget cuts.

Representatives from the offices of State Sen. Ellen Corbett and Assemblymembers Nancy Skinner and Sandre Swanson were present to offer encouragement and a political perspective. Maha Ibrahim from Skinner's office was adamant that Schwarzenegger "made a statement of values about what he sees as important and real. It is my hope that Governor-Elect Jerry Brown will focus on the reality and long-term effect of today's budget choices."

Reggie Lyle, representative from Assemblymember Swanson's office, infused the discussion with a realistic optimism by exclaiming: "This is an exciting time! We have an opportunity to make structural changes that will reflect the priorities of our communities."

He also said, "The key is for us to not weary of the struggle. Apathy is a strategy of the opponent; if we allow ourselves to be demoralized, they win. We have got to keep fighting, appearing, and advocating. We must continue to show up and stand our ground even without knowing exactly when the light will shine through."

California needs a plan that supports the hard work and diligence of its working-class citizens. We need a budget that acknowledges the reality of today's workers who must balance full-time employment and raising a family on limited funds. Our economy would be better off if these families could maintain their self-sufficiency instead of being robbed of the meager support they have in place.

At such a dire time, California must choose wisely when deciding which programs to slash. Realistically, budget cuts must occur. However, California must take into account that cuts to safety net programs will have long-lasting and far-reaching effects.

U.S. Mayors Warn of Deadly Rise in Homelessness

Lack of shelter threatens increases in hypothermia and death on the streets

"More and more people are experiencing homelessness, and they're in grave danger with temperatures dropping. This is a wake-up call to stop the funding cuts."

— Maria Foscarinis, National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

by the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty

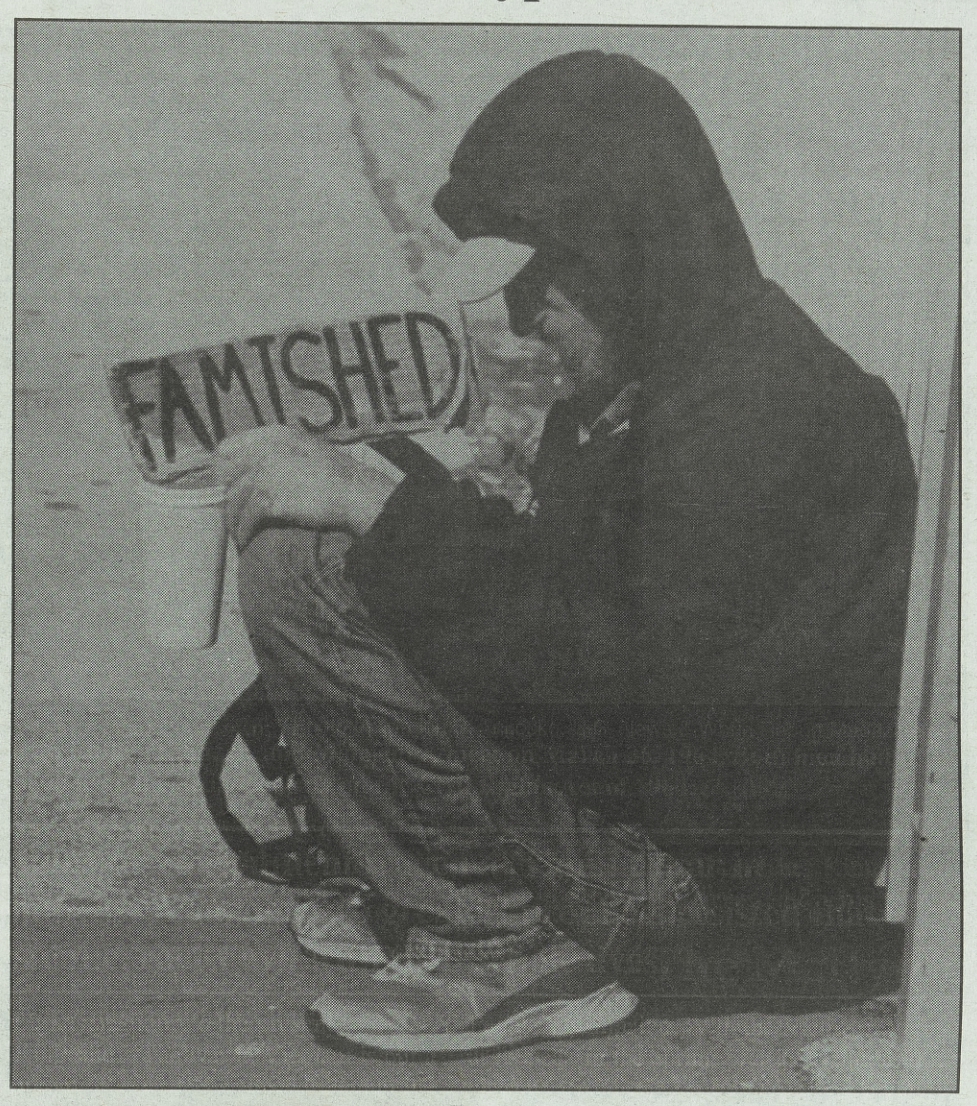
WASHINGTON, D.C.— On National Homeless Persons Memorial Day, Dec. 21, 2010, the U.S. Conference of Mayors released its Annual Hunger and Homelessness Report. It shows significant increases in requests for emergency shelter and food assistance in 27 cities studied.

The report indicates that the number of families experiencing homelessness increased by an average of nine percent and the number of unaccompanied individuals experiencing homelessness increased by an average of 2.5 percent.

In two-thirds of cities surveyed, emergency shelters were forced to turn away homeless people due to lack of capacity. And requests for emergency food assistance jumped 24 percent over the last year.

These shelter requests, limited as they are by bed capacity, only reflect a fraction of the number of those facing the winter months without shelter. And with unprecedented demand and funding cuts limiting available shelter space, thousands of homeless people are at risk of hypothermia and death this winter.

"More and more people are experiencing homelessness, and they're in grave danger with temperatures dropping. This is a wake-up call to stop the funding cuts — and for the federal government to actually increase its investment," said Maria Foscarinis, executive director of the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty. "To call safety-net programs essential is an understatement. This is literally a life-or-death issue."



A homeless man in San Francisco, hungry and alone on the winter streets, holds up a sign bearing a single poignant word: "Famished." Robert L. Terrell photo

With federal stimulus funds beginning to dry up and state and local governments facing major budget shortfalls, there is little now standing between homeless people and a deadly winter.

Some local responses have been less than compassionate. On Dec. 21, the City Council in Washington, D.C. considered a law that would exclude non-D.C. residents from emergency shelter in the District, even during hypothermia season.

New York City is conducting an experiment to test its homelessness prevention program that intentionally denies assistance to eligible applicants for two years as a way of examining whether their homelessness prevention program really works. And cities across the country are restricting the public sharing of food with homeless people, even in this time of great need.

"People are dying who don't need to die," said Foscarinis. "We can absolutely prevent this. But it's going to take political will. As they consider cuts and increases to safety-net funding, I urge legislators at all levels of government to keep in mind the consequences to real human beings."

Since 1990, National Homeless Persons Memorial Day has honored all the men, women, and children who have died while homeless. According to the National Coalition for the Homeless, more than 2,600 homeless people died in 2009. This is likely a significant undercount, given the inherent difficulties in gathering such data.

In Washington, D.C., the deceased were honored at a candlelight vigil at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church.

In Oakland, a memorial for people who died on the streets was held on December 22 at St. Mary's Center. [See the related article by Molly Woodward on page 4 of this issue: "Reverence for Life in the Midst of Death."]

Tax Increases for Workers with the Lowest Incomes

by Joan Clair

A great deal has been written about the tax bill signed into law by President Obama on December 17. "For Many Taxpayers, a Christmas Bonus," reads the headline of one article about the new law by Stephen Ohlemacher in the *West County Times*.

The article includes a table of "Tax changes by income" whose source is the Tax Policy Center based in Washington, D.C. The table factors "Income Level" and whether there has been a tax reduction or a tax increase for that level.

I had to look at the table several times because what I saw was not mentioned in the article or any other article I've read about the new tax law. In fact, there will be no "Christmas Bonus" for taxpayers who have the lowest incomes. Rather, the taxes of lower-income wage earners were increased. This simple fact seems to have been ignored by virtually everyone who has written about the new tax law.

For example, in a letter to the editor of *The Wall Street Journal*, a Certified Public Accountant wrote that, other than complex changes in the estate tax, "All other tax rates are more or less staying the same." More or less. Except for the fact that those whose incomes are less than $10,000 will receive a tax increase of $140. Taxpayers with incomes of $10,000 to $20,000 will receive a tax increase of $121, and taxpayers with incomes of $20,000 to $30,000 will receive a tax increase of $36.

Those whose incomes are between $30,000 and $500,00 will receive a tax reduction starting at $86 for incomes of $30,000 to $40,000 and going up to $1,897 for those whose incomes are between $200,000 and $500.000. In other words, apart from the reinstatement of the estate tax, only taxpayers with the lowest incomes received a tax increase.

If a tax increase of $140 doesn't sound like a lot of money for those whose incomes are less than $10,000, think of President Obama's proposal (which has not gone through) to offer a $250 "bonus" to Social Security recipients who will receive no increase in their benefit this year. The amount of the tax increase, $140, for those with the lowest income comes to more than half of that $250.

What led to the invisibility of those on the lowest levels of income so that these tax increases have no record, that I have been able to discover, of opposition or even indignation? We are told that Obama compromised in allowing tax cuts for the wealthiest among us in exchange for extending unemployment insurance benefits for unemployed workers. But why, from the bonanza of tax cuts and reductions, should those with the smallest incomes have been excluded?

Joel Rosenberg of the Tax Policy Center in Washington, D.C., told me in an interview that the figures in the table of the AP article are from his center and are correct. He explained that the reason why the taxes of low-income wage earners are going up is that, in spite of the fact that they may benefit from the payroll tax cut, that is not enough to compensate for a wage credit that they are losing.

Robert Johnson, a spokesperson for the Institute for New Economic Thinking, an organization which opposes "free market fundamentalism," was quoted in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on December 20 as saying, "We have to reinvigorate our social contract and redefine what we mean by civil society."

There is nothing civil about the new tax law as revealed in the Tax Policy Center's table. The table shows those in the upper income levels receiving more and those on the lowest income levels having more taken away.

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A Reverence for Life in the Midst of Death

Oakland Memorial Honors People Who Died Homeless in the Past Year

by Molly Woodward

Every winter, when freezing temperatures and wet weather make surviving on the streets even harder, communities across the nation take time to remember the people who died homeless over the past year, and to recommit to the fight for one of the most basic of human rights — the right to shelter. Last winter, communities in more than 150 cities sponsored memorial events.

St. Mary's Center in Oakland, a longtime advocate for housing rights, has provided shelter and services for homeless and low-income seniors for more than 35 years. At 11 a.m. on December 22, a group of more than 75 people gathered shoulder-to-shoulder in St. Andrew's park in Oakland, across from St. Mary's Center, to honor the homeless people who have passed away in the past year.

St. Mary's has held such a memorial annually for about a decade. The reason, said Executive Director Carol Johnson, is "because people keep dying homeless."

St. Mary's staff and community members, many of whom are currently or formerly homeless, collaborated to create the ceremony.

"The memorial allows us to remember as a community and reconnect with the tragedy of being homeless, and to motivate our work for justice," said staff member Susan Werner, an art therapist at St. Mary's. The gray morning of December 22 was brightened by flowers, which participants tossed into the center of the circle in honor of a person or an intention.

Incredibly, no one knows just how many people died homeless in the East Bay in 2010. Despite the tireless work of activists, Alameda County has continually refused to distinguish between deaths of people who are housed and people who are homeless. This makes it very difficult to track the reasons why people are dying homeless, whether their conditions are improving or worsening, and what methods might be taken to help prevent their deaths.

An estimated 3.5 million people are currently living homeless in the United States, according to a 2010 report by the Western Regional Advocacy Project. That number has been rising steadily for years.

After opening words and a collective moment of silence, the memorial participants held a candlelight processional back to St. Mary's, where they stood among painted prayer flags around a painting entitled "Heart of All" by artist and community member Leon Kennedy. Kennedy, who has been making art for more than 40 years, was inspired by love and the sense that "what is real is not outward appearances."

Shared poems, prayers, songs, and readings were interwoven with rich melodies from saxophonist Arthur Alexander.

The St. Mary's community finds motivation in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations Assembly in 1948. The Declaration unequivocally holds that every human being has the right to shelter and health care.

Community member Gregory Branch read the words of the Declaration: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family."

After the reading, Branch spoke of the injustice of a society that seems to find it acceptable to leave people suffering and dying on the streets every day.

"You can't have dignity unless you have a place to be," Branch said.

In the United States, "a place to be" is treated not as a basic human right, but as a privilege. In an interview following the memorial, Carol Johnson noted the increasing difficulty of securing a place to live. More people are dependent on subsidized housing, and there's far less of it. This forces people to compete for the few available units.

During St. Mary's vigil for homeless people who died in the past year, Dave Kim, an artist with the Community Rejuvenation Project, painted a portrait of a homeless man holding and comforting another person on the streets. Mina Gaskell photo

The average life expectancy in the housed population is 78 years; the average life expectancy in the homeless population is between 42 and 52 years, according to the National Coalition for the Homeless.

And as more and more local municipalities criminalize the act of occupying space on the street, *space itself* seems to have become a privilege in the United States. If it is illegal for a person to occupy space — to have "a place to be" — in a certain sense it becomes illegal to *live* if you're homeless.

A 2008 study by the National Coalition for the Homeless found that people without houses are three to six times more likely to become ill than housed people, and three to four times more likely to die. Johnson explained that at St. Mary's, seniors who have been chronically homeless often have the physical condition of people at least ten years older.

The national statistics reflect this. The average life expectancy in the housed population is 78 years; the average life expectancy in the homeless population is between 42 and 52 years of age, according to a study by the National Coalition for the Homeless.

Good nutrition, good personal hygiene, and basic first aid become hard to maintain, if not impossible, for someone without shelter. And conditions that require regular treatment, like tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, are extremely difficult to treat without adequate housing. It's a very hard life to be homeless.

The harshness of life on the streets, the callousness of a society that turns its back on poverty, the people who die as a result and have become invisible to local government: these are painful realities to confront. Yet while St. Mary's memorial was a time for mourning, it was also a healing and empowering event.

Participants at St. Mary's memorial put candles around a painting entitled "Heart of All" by artist and community member Leon Kennedy. Mina Gaskell photo

As Werner expressed it, "Hearts are lightened and spirits are brightened when we work and move and sing together for justice." Through every element of the ceremony was a sense that out of darkness and sadness a community can rise up together and make a positive difference.

In the words of community member James Brooks, "This right here is the nucleus of some change."

The memorial closed with the song, "We Shall Overcome." As if by way of punctuation, brilliant rays of sunshine broke through the clouds.

Afterward, people enjoyed one another's company in the courtyard, talking and reflecting on the event before going inside for lunch. "It was most impressive to remember the contribution of those who have gone on before," said community member Mary Collins.

An artist with the Community Rejuvenation Project, Dave Kim, tapped into the spirit of the day to create a painting live, in the moment. He was moved by the spiritual aspect of the ceremony, and by the fact that at St. Mary's, "it's peers helping peers and raising leaders from within to advocate for justice."

Community member Brenda Whitfield, who earlier warmed the ceremony with a powerful and beautiful hymn, appreciated the spirit of caring that infused the afternoon. "I think *every* day should be celebrated with love," she said.

Considering the connection between the day's memorial and the historic fight for human rights, Branch remembered a quote from Malcolm X: "You can't have peace without justice. No one who doesn't have justice can be in peace."

Branch appreciates the diversity and community at St. Mary's. "There are all kinds of people and all kinds of stories that everybody can learn from," he said. "You begin to see the benefit of human life and human experience, and you begin to cherish that. And the appreciation and reverence for human beings helps you get on with the business of making life better."

A reverence for human beings is what St. Mary's memorial was all about. When we as a society commit to recognizing and appreciating the human beings behind the tragedy of homelessness, perhaps we can then get on with the business of making life better.

A New Year's Wish

by Maureen Hartmann

On December 30, 2010
I saw a middle-aged man,
with a gray top hat,
a scraggly beard, and scruffy clothes,
standing forlornly near the
corner of Shattuck and University
in Berkeley.
I wished him a Happy New Year.
My greeting was a prayer of hope
for this despairing world.

The Converging Martyrdom of Malcolm and Martin

from page 1

ative direct action program" would start. If the Civil Rights Act were not passed, he warned, "our nation is in for a dark night of social disruption." [6]

Although Malcolm and Martin would continue to differ sharply on nonviolence, their meeting was an epiphany. Malcolm's escalation of civil rights to human rights and Martin's increasing calls for massive civil disobedience made their prophetic visions complementary.

POLICE INFILTRATION

In April 1964, the New York Police Department, working closely with the FBI, infiltrated Malcolm's new Muslim Mosque in Harlem with its elite intelligence unit, the Bureau of Special Service and Investigation (BOSSI). BOSSI's commander for the deep-cover operation against Malcolm X was Tony Ulasewicz, who would later become infamous as President Richard Nixon's private detective for covert "dirty tricks" that would be exposed by the Senate Watergate hearings.

Four days after Malcolm left New York for his transforming pilgrimage to Mecca, Tony Ulasewicz sent a 25-year-old black detective, Gene Roberts, to an undercover assignment at Malcolm's newly founded Muslim Mosque, where Roberts soon became one of Malcolm's security guards. Although Gene Roberts reported daily to the New York police (and through them, the FBI), he would before long begin to be won over by Malcolm.

At Mecca, Malcolm was converted to a vision he described as "The *brotherhood*! The people of all races, colors, from all over the world coming together as *one*!" He said, "It has proved to me the power of the One God." [7] It also deepened his conviction that "the earth's most explosive and pernicious evil is racism, the inability of God's creatures to live as One, especially in the Western world." [8]

In May 1964, the five men who would kill Malcolm X nine months later came together for the first time, according to the confession of one of them, Talmadge Hayer. They belonged to the Nation of Islam's Mosque Number 25 in Newark.

Two of the men, Benjamin Thomas and Leon Davis, said "word was out that Malcolm X should be killed." [9] Ben Thomas, assistant secretary of the Newark Mosque, was in the Nation of Islam's direct chain of command below Elijah Muhammad and the FBI's assets in the Chicago office.

That summer, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X tried to meet again. FBI agents wiretapped a Malcolm phone call in which they learned that King's attorney, Clarence Jones, left a message for Malcolm. Jones said, "Rev. King would like to meet as soon as possible on the idea of getting a human rights declaration." [10]

In the 12 days before Malcolm departed on a long trip to Africa, he and King were unable to meet. However, the FBI knew, through its electronic surveillance, that Malcolm and Martin were hoping to connect on the human rights issue that could put the United States on trial in the United Nations.

MALCOLM X IS POISONED

While New York police and FBI agents monitored the Muslim Mosque in Harlem, CIA agents followed Malcolm X abroad, making themselves obvious so as to intimidate him. Then, on July 23, as Malcolm was about to present his UN human rights appeal to Africa's nationalist leaders at the Organization of African Unity meeting in Cairo, he was poisoned.

He was having dinner at a hotel with his friend, Milton Henry, he said later, "when two things happened simultaneously. I felt a pain in my stomach and, in a flash, I realized that I'd seen the waiter who served me before. He looked South American, and I'd seen him in New York. The poison bit into me like teeth. It was strong stuff. They rushed me to the hospital just in time to pump the stuff out of my stomach. The doctor told Milton that there was a toxic substance in my food. When the Egyptians who were with me looked for the waiter who had served me, he had vanished. I know that our [Nation of Islam] Muslims don't have the resources to finance a worldwide spy network." [11]

The friend who witnessed his poisoning, Detroit civil rights attorney Milton Henry, warned Malcolm that his UN campaign could mean his death. Henry later felt that it did: "In formulating this policy, in hitting the nerve center of America, he also signed his own death warrant." [12]

For four months, Malcolm X traveled around Africa, holding follow-up meetings with the heads of state who had encouraged him most in Cairo: President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Prime Minister Milton Obote of Uganda, President Azikiwe of Nigeria, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Prime Minister Ahmed Ben Bella of Algeria, and President Sekou Toure of Guinea. [13] At the height of the Cold War, Malcolm X had gained access to Africa's most revolutionary leaders on a politically explosive issue.

On August 13, a *New York Times* correspondent reported from Washington on the State and Justice Departments' "interest in Malcolm X's campaign to convince African states to raise the question of persecution of American Negroes at the United Nations." [14] According to the *Times* article, "[Washington] officials said that if Malcolm succeeded in convincing just one African Government to bring up the charge at the United Nations, the United States Government would be faced with a touchy problem." [15]

"MARTIN LUTHER KING OF GEORGIA" Icon by Robert Lentz © Bridge Building Images

"HOW LONG WILL JUSTICE BE CRUCIFIED AND TRUTH BURIED?"
This icon by Robert Lentz depicts Martin Luther King, Jr. as a martyr for justice. The prison number around his neck and the jail bars represent his many arrests for civil disobedience. The Greek inscription by his head reads, "Holy Martin."

King's commitment to disrupting the temples of the Pentagon and Wall Street, placed him in absolute conflict with a national security state that had taken over the U.S. government.

AN ENEMY OF THE STATE

Washington officials were warning Malcolm publicly to back off. The unmentioned agency responsible for dealing with such "a touchy problem" was the CIA. After consulting with President Lyndon Johnson and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, the State Department told the CIA's director of covert action in a memorandum that "Malcolm X has, for all practical purposes, renounced his U.S. citizenship." [16]

Malcolm had never renounced his citizenship, but the State Department was now telling the CIA's director of covert action to deal with him as if he were a foreign adversary.

After 18 weeks spent meeting with African leaders, Malcolm X flew back to New York at the end of November 1964. He was soon confronted by an issue of the Nation of Islam newspaper, *Muhammad Speaks*, featuring an attack on him by Minister Louis X (known later as Louis Farrakhan). Louis X wrote: "The die is set, and Malcolm shall not escape, especially after such evil, foolish talk about his benefactor... Such a man as Malcolm is worthy of death..." [17]

Louis Farrakhan has in recent years acknowledged publicly that his words "were like fuel on a fire" and "helped create the atmosphere" that moved others to kill Malcolm. [18]

On December 1, 1964, Malcolm's close friend, Alex Quaison-Sackey of Ghana, was elected President of the UN General Assembly. Quaison-Sackey arranged for Malcolm to have his own office at the UN to organize his human rights campaign. [19] Malcolm was not about to back off from his UN confrontation with the United States on human rights.

In February 1965, Malcolm X once again almost connected with Martin Luther King. The place was Selma, Alabama, during a turbulent civil rights campaign. The date was February 4, only 17 days before Malcolm's death.

When Malcolm arrived in Selma after speaking at nearby Tuskegee Institute the night before, King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference staff was panicked. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) activists present wanted Malcolm X to speak to the crowd at Brown Chapel. [20]

With Dr. King in jail, his SCLC staff called on Coretta Scott King to speak after Malcolm to put out his fire. Mrs. King was instead inspired by Malcolm to see the hope of a transforming convergence between him and her husband.

Malcolm told the crowd of activists that because civil rights were human rights, the U.S. government, by failing to uphold their rights, was in violation of the United Nations Charter. Coretta was then impressed by the gentle way in which Malcolm said to her afterwards, "Mrs. King, will you tell Dr. King that I had planned to visit with him in jail? I won't get a chance now because I've got to

See **The Martyrdom** *page 6*

JFK and the Unspeakable
Why He Died and Why It Matters

by James W. Douglass

A new paperback edition published by Simon & Schuster (518 pages).

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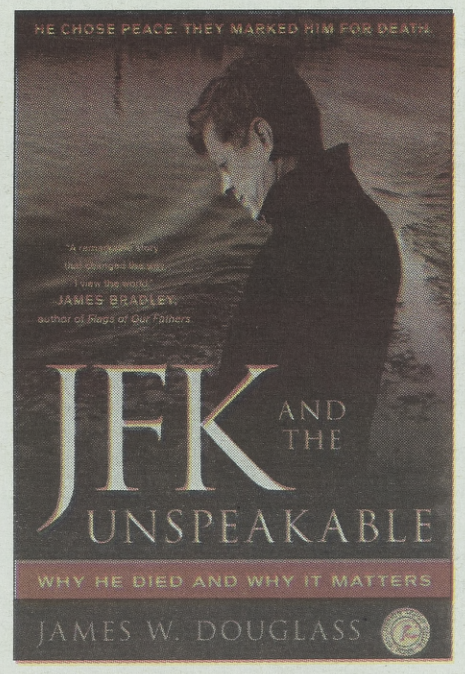

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Martin Luther King, Jr., prisoner #7089, has his mug shot taken by police after he was arrested during the Montgomery bus boycott.

Photo by Marion S. Trikosko, U.S. News & World Report Magazine

Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X meet on March 26, 1964. Both men had come to hear the Senate debate on the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Martyrdom of Malcolm and Martin

While our government waged a criminal war in Southeast Asia, our two greatest prophets resisted that systemic, racist evil with their whole lives.

from page 5

leave to get to New York in time to catch a plane for London..." [21]

MALCOLM BARRED FROM FRANCE

From his speaking engagement in London, Malcolm flew on to Paris. At Orly Airport in Paris, he was given a clue to his impending assassination. He found himself barred from entering France. The French police put him on a flight back to London.

Malcolm X was shocked. Why had France, one of Europe's most liberal countries where he had spoken before without incident, suddenly barred him? The answer was given later to an investigative journalist, Eric Norden, who probed Malcolm's death. A highly placed North African diplomat said word had been passed to his country by French intelligence "that the CIA planned Malcolm's murder, and France feared he might be liquidated on its soil," thereby scapegoating France. [22]

The North African diplomat added, "Your CIA is beginning to murder its own citizens now." [23]

Malcolm X and Martin Luther King were prophets who never stopped turning toward a deeper truth. They kept turning toward the transformation of the world in Allah/God, regardless of the consequences to themselves. Today we know about the murder plots against them because participants in those plots also turned toward the truth.

One such person was Talmadge Hayer, a shooter of Malcolm X, whose confession I have cited. Hayer confessed his crime to try to exonerate two wrongly convicted co-defendants. Hayer recognized he had been manipulated by forces beyond his knowledge into committing a terrible crime. During his three decades in prison, Talmadge Hayer then turned his life around to become Mujahid Abdul Halim, a devout Muslim, who led an exemplary life serving his fellow prisoners in the Napanoch, New York, state prison. [24]

Another witness who turned from his past mistakes, who was then liberated to speak out on Martin Luther King's assassination, was Myron Billett, a member of the Mafia. While serving a sentence in the late 1970s for manslaughter, Myron Billett was visited in the Ohio State Penitentiary by a great Cincinnati minister and peacemaker, Maurice McCrackin, who became his best friend. [25] Billett then revealed to McCrackin that in January 1968 he was present when FBI and CIA agents offered a Mafia leader one million dollars to kill Martin Luther King. [26]

Billett said that at a meeting he had arranged in Apalachin, New York, three representatives of the CIA and FBI asked New York Mafia don Carlo Gambino if he would accept a one-million-dollar contract to assassinate King. Billett recalled the exact words of Gambino's reply: "In no way would I or the family get involved with you people again. You messed up the Cuba deal. You messed up the Kennedy deal." [27]

The CIA and FBI men said they would make "other arrangements" and departed. Three months later, King was murdered in a government conspiracy that, as revealed in the Memphis trial I attended in December 1999, included "other arrangements" with mob intermediaries, namely the New Orleans and Memphis Mafia.

Why?

Why would Martin Luther King be targeted for assassination by his own government's intelligence agencies?

NONVIOLENCE OR NONEXISTENCE

Just as Malcolm X, El-Haj Malik El-Shabazz, took the *Holy Qur'an* seriously, Martin Luther King took the *Holy Bible* seriously. For King, the prophets and Jesus made it imperative that we turn as a people toward justice and peace or we would be destroyed: Nonviolence or nonexistence.

The continually repeated contingency prophecy of Jesus of Nazareth and Martin Luther King is an either/or: Either turn toward our God of Justice and Peace or we as a people will be left with no stone on another. Those who take up the sword (or the Bomb) will perish by the sword (or the Bomb) (*Matthew* 26:52). Nonviolence or nonexistence.

King became a mortal enemy of Washington on April 4, 1967, one year to the day before his assassination, when he said in his great Riverside Church address against the Vietnam War: "I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today — my own government." [28]

Dr. King saw the Vietnam War as the revelation of a profound systemic evil that would define the future of America, as in fact it has, right up to the present.

King said: "The war in Vietnam is but a symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit, and if we ignore this sobering reality we will find ourselves organizing Clergy and Laymen Concerned committees for the next generation. They will be concerned about Guatemala and Peru. They will be concerned about Thailand and Cambodia. They will be concerned about Mozambique and South Africa. We will be marching for these and a dozen other names and attending rallies without end unless there is a significant and profound change in American life and policy. Such thoughts take us beyond Vietnam, but not beyond our calling as children of the living God." [29]

J. EDGAR HOOVER SMEARS KING

However, from the federal government's standpoint, King had gone beyond the point of no return. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover sent a memorandum to President Johnson stating: "Based on King's recent activities and public utterances, it is clear that he is an instrument in the hands of subversive forces seeking to undermine our nation." [30]

In the Memphis trial, Rev. James Lawson, King's friend and co-organizer, testified that hatred and fear of King deepened in response to his plan to hold the Poor People's Campaign in Washington, D.C. According to King's vision, an interracial army of poor persons would come together in the nation's capital in late April 1968. They would then engage in wave after wave of mass civil disobedience to dislocate the functioning of the city.

King hoped that the waves of poor Americans from around the country would tie up Washington through nonviolent direct action until Congress passed a comprehensive anti-poverty bill. The absolute minimum in legislation, King told reporters, was a full-employment commitment, a guaranteed annual income, and a half-million units of low-income housing per year. [31] Policymakers feared King would succeed in bringing the nation's capital to a halt until federal officials made a commitment to eliminate poverty in the United States.

The intelligence community also knew, from listening electronically to King's meetings and phone conversations, that he had an even broader vision of the Poor People's Campaign. With the Vietnam War at its peak in the spring of 1968, King told his staff, "After we get [to D.C.], and stay a few days, [we'll] call the peace movement in, and let them go on the other side of the Potomac and try to close down the Pentagon, if that can be done." [32]

In his Canadian Broadcasting Corporation lectures at the end of 1967 (later published as *The Trumpet of Conscience*), King's vision went beyond even these concerns. He saw the next step as a global nonviolent movement using escalating acts of massive civil disobedience to disrupt the entire international order and block economic and political exploitation across borders. [33]

King saw the Memphis sanitation workers' strike as the beginning of the Poor People's Campaign, which was, in turn, a step toward a global nonviolent revolution. The power structure knew, perhaps better than we did, the breadth of this prophet's vision. Memphis was a last chance to stop him before he led the Poor People's Campaign into Washington, D.C.

Rev. Lawson testified in the Memphis trial: "I have no doubt that the government viewed all this seriously enough to plan his assassination." [34]

Martin Luther King's commitment to walk the way of Jesus in our modern Jerusalem, by disrupting the temples of the Pentagon and Wall Street, placed him in absolute conflict with a national security state that had taken over the U.S. government, making it the most powerful government in history.

In the course of the Cold War, the U.S. government sanctioned covert action and assassinations, just as it does today more publicly. Given what Washington had become, and who Martin was becoming, it would be surprising if King were *not* to be assassinated by his government.

The assassinations of Malcolm and Martin have close parallels, because they can be traced to the same sources: our government's covert action agencies.

Both men were set up.

MALCOLM'S HOME FIREBOMBED

At 2:45 a.m. on March 14, 1965, the Queens home in which Malcolm X and his family were sleeping was firebombed. Malcolm, Betty Shabazz, who was six months pregnant with twins, and their

See **The Martyrdom** *page 7*

The Martyrdom of Malcolm and Martin

from page 6

four daughters barely escaped.

Two days after the firebombing, police detectives told the media that a whisky bottle containing gasoline had been found "intact and upright on top of a baby dresser" in the house, implying that Malcolm had left it there. [35] Both the police and a Nation of Islam spokesman suggested Malcolm burned down his house for the sake of publicity. The police did not mention that it was Betty Shabazz who, on returning to the gutted house to salvage belongings, had found the bottle on her baby's dresser. She had pointed it out to firefighters. How had it gotten there?

Malcolm X had been saying, "My house was bombed by the Black Muslim movement upon the orders of Elijah Muhammad." [36] When Shabazz discovered the bottle of gasoline on the dresser and the police raised it publicly, she and Malcolm knew, as Shabazz said later, "Only someone in the uniform of a fireman or a policeman could have planted the bottle of gasoline on my baby's dresser." [37]

The police had tried to scapegoat them. Malcolm and Betty suspected they were being set up for something worse.

In the meantime, a dry run of Malcolm's assassination had already been carried out at the Audubon Ballroom. It was witnessed by the New York police infiltrator, Gene Roberts, who had become Malcolm's security guard. By this time, Roberts had also become Malcolm's friend and admirer. He was taking his role as Malcolm's bodyguard more seriously that his mentors wanted.

When Malcolm X spoke at the Audubon Ballroom on Monday, February 15, Roberts saw a preview of what would happen the following Sunday: a fake disruption in the audience designed to draw everyone's attention, then a movement elsewhere toward Malcolm, which on Sunday would include three shooters firing simultaneously.

Roberts said he called his New York police supervisors when the meeting was over. He said, "Listen. I just saw the dry run on Malcolm's life. I feel like it's going to go down next Sunday."

They said, "Okay, we'll pass it on." [38]

When Martin Luther King went to Memphis on March 28, 1968, to march with the sanitation workers, government provocateurs infiltrated the march. The provocateurs broke windows, disrupted the march, and provoked a police riot.

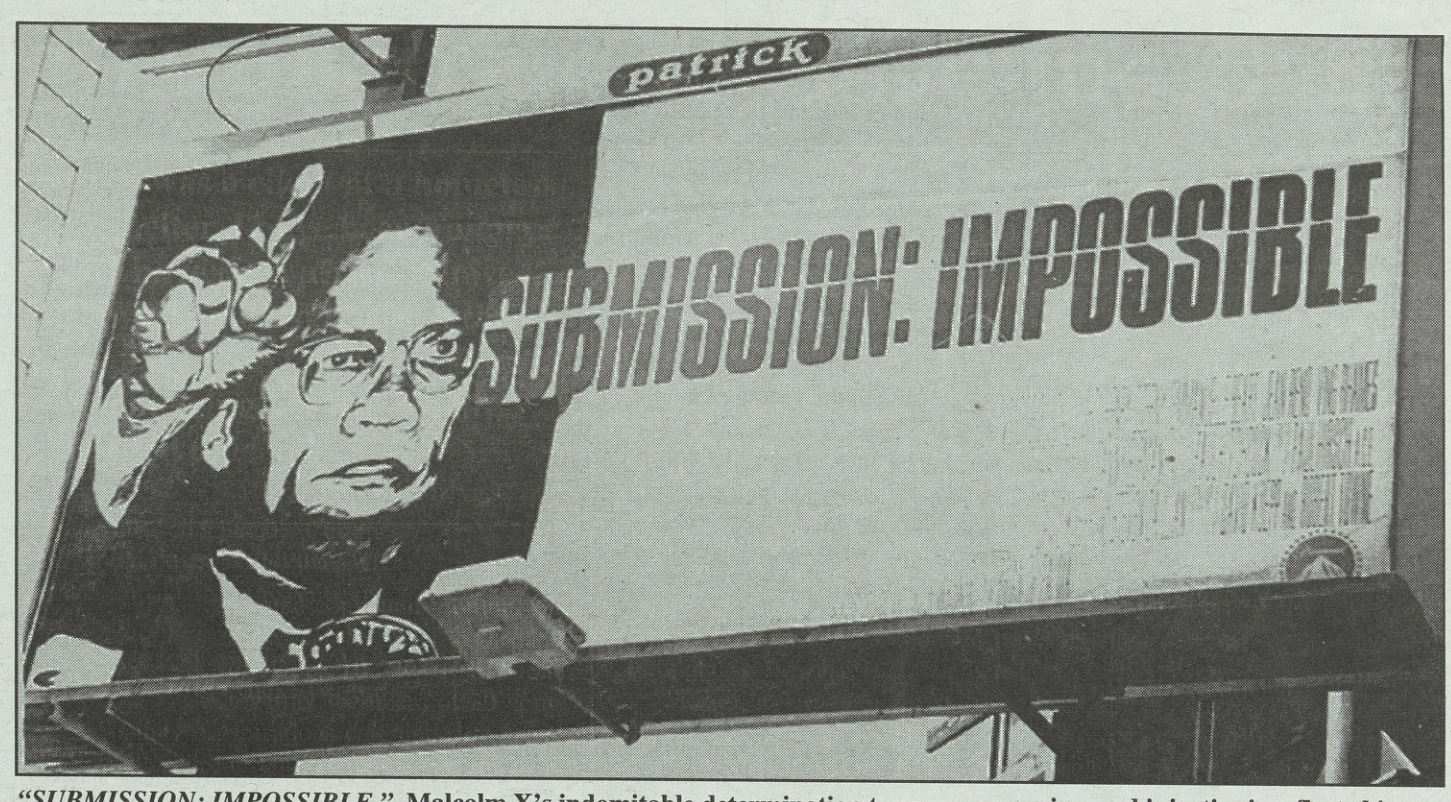
KING SET UP FOR ASSASSINATION

The violence made it necessary for King to return to Memphis on April 3, to prepare for a truly nonviolent march that would prove SCLC could carry out a nonviolent Poor People's Campaign in Washington. [39] By being forced to return to Memphis, King was being set up for his assassination.

He was also channeled into registering at the Lorraine Motel. On the day after the disrupted march, an FBI-authored article was passed to news media that read: "The fine Hotel Lorraine in Memphis is owned and patronized exclusively by Negroes but King didn't go there from his hasty exit [from the march]. Instead King decided the plush Holiday Inn Motel, white owned, operated and almost exclusively white patronized, was the place to 'cool it.' There will be no boycott of white merchants for King, only for his followers." [40]

Although the Lorraine Motel posed security problems, those making King's arrangements booked him there beginning April 3, just as the FBI wanted.

The Lorraine's owners, Walter and Lorraine Bailey, initially gave King a more secure inner-court room behind the motel's office. However, Martin's SCLC staff, like Malcolm's Muslim Mosque, had been infiltrated by the government. [41]



"SUBMISSION: IMPOSSIBLE." **Malcolm X's indomitable determination to overcome racism and injustice is reflected in this billboard, which was creatively altered by the California Department of Corrections, a group of rebel billboard artists.**

On the night before King's arrival in Memphis, an unidentified male member of King's staff in Atlanta phoned the Baileys at the Lorraine. The man insisted that King's room be changed from the (more secure) inside location to an outside balcony room completely exposed to public view. [42] The change was made. The scene was set for April 4, 1968.

Malcolm's and Martin's assassinations were both characterized by a withdrawal of police security.

When the New York police authorities received Gene Roberts' warning from the dry run he witnessed on Malcolm X's life, they responded by stationing their officers at the Audubon the following Sunday in rooms *away from* the ballroom. They ordered their men not to move in the direction of the ballroom, unless given permission by their superiors on a walkie-talkie.

When the police who had been removed from the scene of Malcolm's murder then heard shots coming from the ballroom, the walkie-talkie went dead. [43] The police wound up strolling into the ballroom 15 minutes after Malcolm X was killed, a scene made famous in Spike Lee's film. [44]

WITHDRAWAL OF KING'S SECURITY

Martin Luther King's ordinary police security in Memphis included a special unit of black officers commanded by Captain Jerry Williams. However, for King's April 3 arrival, Williams was disturbed that he was not asked to form the special black bodyguard. [45]

Moreover, two black firefighters at Fire Station 2, across the street from the Lorraine Motel, were inexplicably transferred early on April 4 to fire stations where they were not needed. [46]

In addition, a black Memphis Police Department detective, Ed Redditt, who was watching King's room from a Fire Station 2 surveillance post, was suddenly removed from his post two hours before King's murder. The order was given by Memphis Police and Fire Director Frank Holloman, who had recently retired from 25 years with the FBI, seven of them as the supervisor of J. Edgar Hoover's office.

Holloman ordered Detective Redditt to go home because, Holloman claimed, Redditt's life had been threatened. Redditt protested, obeyed the order, and arrived home just as King was shot. [47]

Finally, also on April 4, by order of Frank Holloman's subordinate, Inspector Sam Evans, the four tactical police units patrolling the Lorraine Motel area were all pulled back, thereby allowing an assassin to escape more easily. [48]

The assassination of Malcolm X on Sunday, February 21, 1965, at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem proceeded like an execution, for that is what it was.

A J. Edgar Hoover memorandum of February 4 shows that Malcolm on his trip to England and France was monitored by a complete covert action network. It included the FBI, the CIA Director, the CIA's Deputy Director of Plans (meaning covert action and assassinations), the Army Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, the Director of Naval Intelligence, the Chief of the Air Force Counterintelligence Division, and offices in London and Paris too sensitive to be identified. [49]

These were the chickens Malcolm X was talking about in his comment on JFK's assassination that launched him into independence from Elijah Muhammad. Now, after Malcolm's pilgrimage to Mecca and revolutionary Africa, as he sought to bring the United States to court in the United Nations, the same chickens were coming home to roost for him.

THE EXECUTION OF MALCOLM X

On the morning of February 21, Malcolm X said to his sister, Ella, in a phone call, "Ask Allah to guide me, because I feel they may have me doomed for this day."

"Not this day," Ella protested.

"Yes, this day," Malcolm said. [50]

Before walking out on the Audubon Ballroom stage on the afternoon of February 21, Malcolm told his staff, as he had told Alex Haley the day before, that he was going to stop saying it was the Black Muslims who bombed his home: "I know what they can do. Things have gone beyond that." [51]

His assistant, Benjamin Goodman, introduced Malcolm X to the audience of 400 people in the Audubon as "a man who would give his life for you." [52]

After receiving a long, standing ovation, Malcolm greeted everyone, including the assassins he assumed were present: "As-salaam alaikum." ("Peace be with you.) The response came back: "Wa-laikum salaam." ("And with you peace.")

Then, as in the dry run on Monday, a man near the back of the ballroom yelled, "Get your hand out of my pocket, man!"

Malcolm responded to the sounds of a beginning fight by stepping out from behind the podium and walking to the front of the stage, thus making himself a perfect target. He said, "Now, now, brothers, break it up. Hold it..." Two men with pistols stood up in the front row, and a man behind them with a shotgun moved into the aisle and stepped forward. All three men fired point blank at Malcolm X. [53]

Martin Luther King's assassination was also an execution.

Everything was in place on April 4, 1968. The Mafia's Frank Liberto, a Memphis produce dealer, had sent a courier to deliver $100,000 to Loyd Jowers, the owner of Jim's Grill, whose back door opened onto the dense bushes across the street from the Lorraine Motel.

Jowers then received a rifle in a box on April 3 from a man named Raul. It was Raul who also brought the scapegoat, James Earl Ray, into Memphis on April 4, after Raul had shepherded Ray in Canada, the United States, and Mexico since the previous summer.

We know Loyd Jowers' role in the King assassination because he confessed to Martin's son, Dexter King, and former UN Ambassador Andrew Young in a fall 1998 meeting that was tape-recorded. The audiotape was played for the jury at the December 1999 trial I attended.

In his confession, Jowers said that meetings to plan the assassination took place at Jim's Grill. The planners included undercover Memphis Police Department (MPD) Officer Marrell McCollough, who went on to a career with the CIA, Police Lieutenant Earl Clark, a third police officer, and two men who Jowers thought were federal agents.

At 6:00 p.m. on April 4, 1968, James Earl Ray was several blocks away at a service station, trying to get a flat spare tire fixed. Unknown to Ray, the fake evidence to scapegoat him had already been left near the entrance to the boarding house where he had rented a room, as we learned from the King trial testimony of Judge Arthur Hanes Jr., Ray's former attorney.

At ten minutes before the assassination, the rifle Ray had bought at Raul's orders was dropped in the doorway of the Canipe Amusement Company. [54] In the King trial, witness Judge Joe Brown, who had the planted rifle tested, said that because its scope had not been sighted, "this weapon literally could not have hit the broad side of a barn." [55]

At 6:00 p.m., the hired shooter was in the thick brush and bushes directly across from the Lorraine Motel, aiming the real rifle at Martin Luther King, who was standing on the balcony in front of his room. [56]

Early the next morning, as established by trial testimony, those same bushes were cut down by order of Police Inspector Sam Evans, thus destroying the crime scene. [57]

Also at 6:00 p.m., an Army Special Forces sniper team had been deployed as a contingency force on two buildings and a water tower overlooking the Lorraine. The snipers' deployment was described in what a King trial juror called "awesome" testimony [58] by Jack Terrell, a CIA operative and close friend of one of the snipers, J.D. Hill (who was later shot to death himself).[59]

While the shooter in the bushes began to squeeze his trigger, the three Army

See **The Martyrdom** *page 8*

The Martyrdom of Malcolm and Martin

from page 7

snipers were training their sights on both King and his presumed successor, Andrew Young. The snipers waited for a radio command to fire. It never came.

Instead a shot from the bushes killed Martin Luther King. [60]

PILGRIMAGE INTO MARTYRDOM

Investigating the assassinations of Martin and Malcolm over the past decade has been a pilgrimage into martyrdom. From that journey, I have learned, first of all, how naïve I was about systemic evil. While there is nothing new about prophets being murdered by the system, I was not aware of how well our own system carries out such murders — and why.

I believe a key to this untold history is the fact that our government was the first to develop and use nuclear weapons. The democratic principles we profess were, from the beginning, in conflict with such weapons and our refusal to submit them to international control. Nuclear weapons and civil liberties don't go together. Nuclear weapons and life don't go together.

The rise of our national security state after World War II, as justified by the Cold War that our nuclear weapons created, was the effective end of democracy in this country. That history of a national security state replacing a democracy was climaxed by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, an event that foreshadows the martyrdom of Malcolm and Martin.

A nuclear weapons state that maintains the myth of being a democracy requires what our newspeak language calls "intelligence agencies," which specialize in covert action, assassinations, and propaganda, and whose targets include U.S. citizens.

The CIA and its related covert action/propaganda agencies have evolved into what we today, with more newspeak (and a verbal surrender to our former World War II enemies), call "Homeland Security." I believe the reason why Malcolm's and Martin's assassinations by our own government can still shock us is that we are in denial of the fact that our government, by embracing nuclear weapons, became a national security state.

Malcolm and Martin, each in his own unique way, challenged that system to be true to its democratic origins, as did John F. Kennedy and his brother, Robert. The four of them offered a combined witness to a process of justice, peace, and nuclear disarmament through which the people of this country could achieve a truly democratic government. Until we turn in that direction, I believe what Martin said remains true in a more terrible sense than ever: The greatest purveyor of terrorism in the world today is my own government.

Martyrdom is a witness to a Reality that can overcome any evil on earth. We are talking here about the Reality of Allah/God that was at the center of our prophets' willingness to confront the system with their whole lives, in an effort to change it for the sake of life itself.

I want to conclude with what Martin and Malcolm said about martyrdom at the ends of their lives — seeing their words and spirits united with each other and with us today, to sustain us in the journey ahead.

In the talk King gave at Mason Temple in Memphis the night before he died, with thunder cracking outside and the people rising to his words inside, he repeated the prophecy of Jesus that is the test of our survival: "It is no longer a choice between violence and nonviolence in the world; it's nonviolence or nonexistence." [61]

To choose the nonviolent alternative in that prophecy, rather than our extinction as a species, Martin said, "Let us develop a kind of dangerous unselfishness," [62] on a journey down the Jericho road that the Good Samaritan traveled when he helped the man in the ditch, a dangerous road where a person can be easily ambushed.

Martin went down that road to help the sanitation workers in Memphis, and he was ambushed. He felt it coming, as we know from his final words that night.

God had allowed him, he said, to go up to the mountain, and to look over. And he'd seen the promised land.

Sometimes I think we hear the next part a little too easily, Martin's certainty that "we, as a people, will get to the promised land." Well, Martin was speaking to an oppressed people who'd chosen nonviolence — the striking sanitation workers of Memphis, who were marching for justice. They were the people on their way to the promised land.

Martin wasn't so certain where the rest of us were going. He continued warning, right up to the end, about where we as a nation were going. Three hours before his death the next day, Martin phoned his church in Atlanta with the title of his Sunday sermon that he would never deliver:"Why America May Go to Hell." [63]

Malcolm X, as a deep believer in Islam, in Peace, chose to die as a martyr. Two days before his death, he spoke with his friend, the photographer Gordon Parks. Malcolm said, "It's a time for martyrs now. And if I'm to be one, it will be in the cause of brotherhood. That's the only thing that can save this country. I've learned it the hard way — but I've learned it. And that's the significant thing." [64]

Malcolm also chose not to go into exile to avoid martyrdom. Twelve days before his death, he had listened patiently in a London hotel room, while a friend, Guyan writer Jan Carew, summoned every word at his command to persuade Malcolm not to return to the United States and almost certain death. Carew even invoked the authority of their ancestral spirit world, "the ghosts in our blood," to argue against the folly of martyrdom:

"Those ancestral spirits whisper warnings, whenever we're about to do something reckless or foolhardy. Right now they should be whispering to you that, perhaps, surviving for our cause is more important than dying for it." [65]

Malcolm answered, "The spirit world's fine but I want our folk to be free in the world of the living." [66] And the unspoken thought: So for the sake of the living, I'll live the truth freely and openly all the way, regardless of the consequences.

In Malcolm's eyes, that was freedom. By living and speaking the truth freely, Malcolm denied to the system that assassinated him the victory of taking away his life. He instead gave it freely in the cause of brotherhood and sisterhood — or as he put it at Mecca, for a vision of "the people of all races, colors, from all over the world coming together as one! It has proved to me the power of the One God." [67]

A "martyr" is literally a witness.

Martin Luther King, by going to Memphis, on his way to Washington and the Poor People's Campaign, was a witness to a vision of transformation — provided we're willing to pay the price.

Malcolm X, by going to Africa, on his way to the United Nations and an African American stand for human rights, was a witness to a vision of transformation — provided we're willing to pay the price.

Malcolm X's final action, in stepping forward to reconcile two brothers in a fight, made him not only a target for murder, but also a witness to brotherhood, sisterhood, and the unity of our one family in one God. As he said to his assassins and to us all, "As-salaam alaikum."

And as Martin said, "I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord." [68]

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20. Taylor Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963-1965* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), p. 578.

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22. Eric Norden, "The Murder of Malcolm X," *The Realist* (February 1967), p. 12.

23. Ibid.

24. Author's conversations with Nuriddin Faiz, former Chaplain of the World Community of Islam at the Eastern Correctional Facility, Napanoch, New York, where he visited Mujahid Abdul Halim as his minister.

25. When Myron Billett was released from prison for health reasons, Maurice McCrackin baptized him. He was his minister for the rest of Billett's life. McCrackin remembered Myron Billett with deep respect: "There's no finer person and more caring spirit I've known than Myron. He was very gentle and always the same. It was just remarkable looking at him and realizing what he'd been a part of." Author's interview of McCrackin, March 11, 1997.

26. In addition to Maurice McCrackin, Myron Billett told the story of the FBI/CIA offer of a million-dollar contract to kill King to author William Pepper, to members of the House Select Committee on Assassinations, and on a 1989 BBC documentary produced shortly before his death. William F. Pepper, *Orders to Kill: The Truth Behind the Murder of Martin Luther King* (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1995), pp. 146-48. John Edginton, producer, *Who Killed Martin Luther King?* (BBC Television, 1989).

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28. King, "Beyond Vietnam."

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34. Citations from the wrongful death lawsuit of the Martin Luther King Jr. family versus Loyd Jowers "and other unknown co-conspirators," held in Memphis, November 15-December 8, 1999, have been drawn from testimony in the trial transcript, online at www.thekingcenter.com.

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